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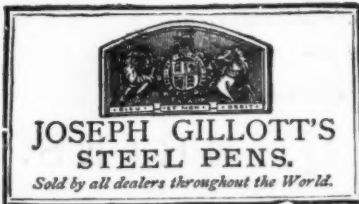
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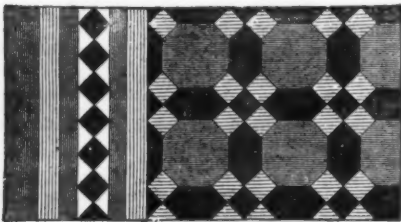
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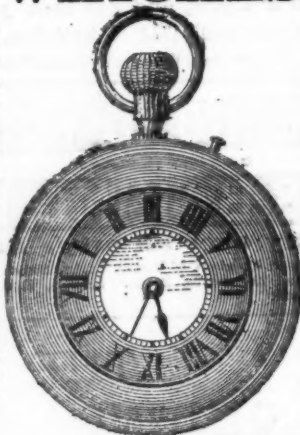
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CHAPTER I. OF MYSELF.

I MEAN to write about myself first of all.

It has been an annoyance to me that at my christening my parents, or my god-fathers and godmothers, or whoever else was concerned in the matter, should have given me so absurd a name as Nicholas. I think that children should be allowed to choose their own names, or to decline to bear names of an objectionable sort. At school I had to fight many boys who tried to be funny at my expense and to taunt me with being called Nicholas—rhyming it with "ridiculous," and so on. However, the boys I fought with I generally thrashed—that was one comfort. Still I should have been spared a good deal of trouble if some ensible name, such as John, or Henry, or William, had been allotted me.

The members of my own family added to my vexations, by shortening Nicholas into Nick. Now Nicholas is a bad name, but Nick is ten times worse. Of course they did not mean any harm; families have a way of shortening christian-names; I was never one to make a fuss about trifles, and I was not going to quarrel with them for such a reason as that. So I let them go on calling me Nick. All the same, I am clearly of opinion that they ought to have considered my feelings on the subject. Indeed, speaking generally, it has been the fault of my family that they have not sufficiently considered my

sentiments on most subjects. I have always taken care that out of my own family very few should be permitted to address me as Nick. Whenever any of my fellow-clerks ventured to take that liberty, I speedily let him know that, for his own sake, he had better not let such a thing happen again.

My father died of cholera in the prison called The Bench, leaving no provision for his three children. As his eldest son, I felt that certain duties had devolved upon me. I was left the head of the family, and I was anxious to do all I could on my own account, and also on behalf of my sister Doris and my brother Basil. To my dying day I shall maintain that Doris and Basil did not rightly understand the true state of the case, and were very injudicious, to say the least of it, in the course of conduct they thought proper to adopt. They would have done far better, if they had submitted themselves to the guidance and control of one who had nothing but their good at heart, and who was older and far more competent to act than they were.

It was my task to examine my late father's letters and papers. I found among them his correspondence with certain relations settled in the North of England. I have always regarded these people as belonging to what I must call the illegitimate branch of our family. At the same time I am bound to state that they seemed to consider us—my father and his three children—as belonging to an illegitimate branch of their family. The thing turns upon a question of pedigree, which is not worth discussion now by me, or by anybody else. So far, however, these folks in the North allowed my

father's claim of kindred that they doled out to him from time to time various sums of money, always under protest, however, and with an understanding that he was not to intrude himself upon them otherwise. They would recognise him as entitled to a measure of their bounty, but they did not want to see him; in fact, they rather wanted not to see him, and they would be obliged to him if he would only keep aloof from them. My father submitted to these conditions, which were, I think, a trifle degrading. However, he thought it well upon any terms to avail himself of their pecuniary assistance. He had been, I must say, rather short of money all his life.

Upon my father's death I applied to these relatives of ours in the North, without much result. They manifested little surprise at the painful news it had been my duty to communicate to them. Indeed, they described my father's death as "a happy release," which, I thought, was an offensive way of stating the case. However, I should wish to do them justice. They sent up a sum of fifty pounds in Bank of England notes, which I found to be of great service in discharging the numberless small charges and liabilities that arise on such occasions. At the same time, I was bidden to take note that nothing further would be done for me, or for my brother or sister. We were expressly advised, indeed, not to insist further upon a relationship which they were determined to dispute, and from which we could really obtain nothing whatever. They turned upon us what is called "the cold shoulder." We submitted, and steadily refrained from troubling them further.

I was anxious to be at work, and to be earning my living as soon as possible. I sought employment in various quarters, and carefully studied the advertisement-sheet of *The Times*. Whenever I read or heard of a young man being wanted anywhere, I hurried thither to assert that I was exactly the sort of young man that was wanted. At last I secured an engagement in what was known as Baker's Bank, Whitechapel; but I must admit that my success was not due solely to my own pertinacity and enterprise. Mr. Leveridge, it appeared, knew something of Baker, and, at the right moment, had spoken a good word for me. Baker was, in his way, a patron of art, and had bought pictures of Mr. Leveridge.

It may seem disrespectful to speak of

him plainly as Baker, without the usual prefix of Mister; but that was the way in the neighbourhood of the bank. Indeed, he was commonly known as Old Baker. It was understood that his rise to wealth had been entirely due to his own industry and natural intelligence; for of education he could make little boast. He could read and write after a fashion; but further than that he did not go. It was told of him that he had been a parish boy, of unknown parentage; that he had been apprenticed to a small grocer in the Commercial-road; that he had run of errands and swept out the shop; then his master dying—of drink, people said—young Baker had married the widow, and carried on the business on her own account and his own. Presently he had enlarged the shop—had, indeed, opened another shop at a little distance, and was doing something in the money-lending way. The result was the establishment of Baker's Bank and the great prosperity of Baker. In those days joint-stock banks were more limited in their operations than they are at present.

Baker's was, of course, only a small bank, in a very unfashionable neighbourhood—some described it as a very low neighbourhood. The customers of the bank were the tradesmen and dealers of the district, which extended, as we used to consider, down to the docks and the river-side.

"We're a rough lot here, you must understand," said old Baker to me, when I went to enquire about the situation. "Can you fight?"

"Yes," I said; "I can use my fists when there's any occasion."

"You know what to do when you're hit hard?"

"Hit back harder."

"Let's feel your arm. Hard as nails, I declare! You're young and thin, but you're strong and springy. If I did not carry quite so much flesh I should like to put on the gloves, and have a round or two with you. I like you, young man. I don't mind telling you so. I think you might do. Your appearance is in your favour, and you've a good strong arm. I take for granted that you know how to read, and write, and cipher. You've no knowledge of business, you tell me? Well, you'll soon learn what you've got to do. It's very simple. Only be industrious and honest, and keep your wits about you, and take good care of my property. There's

people in this neighbourhood as would think little of knocking a banker's clerk on the head, for the sake of anything he might happen to have in his pockets. They've been dropping on two or three of my young men lately; there's one at home now with a broken head, poor boy. He made a good fight too; but they were too much for him, and, then, he wasn't nearly your size or your weight. You see what sort of situation this is. You'll have to carry bills, and sometimes gold and notes, through a very rough lot and very queer quarters. Are you frightened?"

"Not a bit."

"Then come here the first thing on Monday morning, and consider yourself employed in Baker's Bank."

I must say that he was rather a common-looking old man. He seldom took off his hat, and he was fond of going without his coat, fully revealing his crumpled, flapping shirt-sleeves, his expansive black satin waistcoat. His face was red; his iron-gray hair was combed straight on to his flushed and rugged forehead. His voice was loud and harsh. He often mispronounced his words, spoke very bad grammar, and dealt erroneously with the letter H. His temper was very violent, his manners were vulgar, and his consumption of brown brandy and water was very large. But there was something honest and hearty, downright and straightforward about old Baker, that one couldn't help liking.

"Serve me faithful, young man," he said to me one day, "and you shall never want a friend. But if I find you selling me, out you go instanter."

And he pointed to the door, while he scowled, until his bloodshot old eyes were nearly hidden by his bushy old eyebrows.

I served him to the best of my ability, and to his satisfaction, as he often told me. I was not very quick at first. I am never very quick at learning things, and I rather tried his patience. Sometimes he flamed out at me very considerably. I said little, for I knew that I was wrong somehow, and that he was certainly right. But on another occasion he had put himself into a passion very unnecessarily. He had found fault with me without just cause. So when he scolded me, I scolded back again, and very high words passed between us. Upon this, old Baker looked further into the matter in dispute between us. In the end, he frankly confessed that the error was his own, he shook hands with

me, and insisted upon my drinking his health. He produced for the occasion a bottle of old port-wine.

"When I make such another mistake, young fellow, you tell me of it. Only, if I were you, you know, I wouldn't tell it in quite so fierce a way. You see, I'm the banker, and you're the clerk. We're master and man, that's what we are. And to be plain with you, I was very nearly knocking you down only just five minutes ago. Still I don't think any the worse of you, but rather the better, for standing to your guns when you knew you were in the right."

At first my salary was very small, with an understanding that I was to receive a present at Christmas. I was duly rewarded by a payment of ten pounds. I lived over the bank with certain of the other clerks, and we were boarded by old Baker in a plain but ample way. In the early days of the bank, old Baker had lived there himself with his wife and family—his second or third wife, I forget which; his first, the grocer's widow, had been dead some time before—but now he occupied a pleasant, old-fashioned, red-brick house near Chingford, Essex, and drove to and fro every day in a mail-coach. He was proud of his horses, paid large sums for them, and was fond of driving very fast indeed. He would invite his clerks, one or two at a time, to spend Sunday at his Chingford house, when he regaled them with a very liberal dinner, and produced excellent wine. Afterwards, the weather being fine, he would sit in a summer-house built on the brink of the fish-pond in the garden, and smoke a long clay pipe of the churchwarden kind. Later on, the three Miss Bakers, his daughters, would open the piano, play sacred music, and sing hymns. They were nice-looking girls, with very fair complexions, pale, flaxen hair, and light blue eyes. They were rather shy, and apt to blush when they were addressed, and when you spoke to one, the others joined in replying, treating you to a trio, when you had only looked for a solo. And they had an irritating way of whispering and giggling together whenever any of the clerks from Baker's Bank visited him at Chingford, as though the clerks were a joke that needs must be ridiculous and laughable.

A trusty head-cashier—an old bachelor—took charge of the bank and presided over the junior clerks. At night, we bolted

and barred, as though in dread of desperate attack from the outside. All the shutters were lined with iron, and the windows well fortified with bars. There was also a good supply of firearms upon the premises, and it was understood to be the duty of every clerk to shed his life's blood in defence of Baker's Bank. We were for ever reminding each other that we lived in "a rough neighbourhood," and that any day something violent and dangerous might really come to pass. Stories were current of attempts of a burglarious kind that had been made upon the bank in times past. But we none of us really believed, I think, in the perils of which we were so often speaking. Perhaps we talked of them so much and so often, as really to talk the seriousness out of them.

A SOUTH-RUSSIAN POET.

TARASS CHEVCHENKO was born a serf; and serfdom is not a wholesome condition for a human creature. Under a good lord the serf's lot might be superior to that of the English labourer in some of those dreary villages where there is no resident squire, and where the farmers are more than usually hard and unenlightened; but all masters are not good, and the mischief of serfdom and slavery is, that they leave too much to the individual. Man needs checks of all kinds to keep him straight. In England, if one farmer is exceptionally hard, the labourers will go to another; and there are various courts of appeal, unestablished but none the less influential, which help to keep things straight. Where serfdom was the rule, poverty was not—as theoretically it ought to have been—abolished; and, worst evil of all, the disposition to help distress in general was lessened because it was each owner's business to look after his own serfs; he was their "father," and to interfere might be resented as an affront. Moreover, Chevchenko belonged to a race among whom serfdom was a recent introduction. This South Russia, or Little Russia, of which he is the popular poet, is what we also call the Ukraine—the land of Cossacks, who were free till the middle of the seventeenth century. Free they were, but not safe, with their loose organisation of village communities—not centralised enough to bear the pressure of modern times—and with eager enemies, Poles, Turks, Russians, watching them

all round. Of these the Poles were the worst.

Poland has suffered a great deal, no doubt of it. Her sufferings are a disgrace, not only to the arch-robber and persecutor and to the other two who shared in the spoil, but to all the other "powers" who looked on, and did nothing—did not even get up a conference on the occasion. But then, Poland, in her time, was a hard mistress, deservedly hated by her kinsfolk of Little Russia. She had "annexed" them as far as the right bank of the Dnieper, and had made her rule odious, by that petty kind of tyranny which it is the hardest thing in the world to forgive. For instance, the Poles then, as now, were zealous Romanists, and they worried the schismatic Cossacks, by putting all the church-lands in their part of the Ukraine into the hands of the Jews. Worse still, every church matter was transacted through Jews; the wafers for consecration could only be bought of Jews, who, the Cossacks believed, never sold any, without having first desecrated them by stamping them with some unholy mark. So, when it seemed needful to choose a protector, lest the other half of the Ukraine should likewise be swallowed up, no one thought of the Poles; the question was: "Turks or Russians?" Many were for the Turks; they were a strong nation then, and they had won the respect of their neighbours by a habit of truth-telling, not over common in any part of Christendom, and especially rare to the eastward. Moreover, they were tolerant. If their Christian subjects would pay tribute, they were safe to be undisturbed in the practice of their religion. During the two centuries of Tartar rule in Russia, when the Grand Duke of Novgorod, or by whatever other title he styled himself, was the humble vassal of "the Golden Horde," the churches rarely or ever suffered, the bishops were protected. However, the hetman of the Cossacks, Bogdan Chamelnitsky, decided for Russia, and, in 1651, the Ukraine put itself under her protection, stipulating that she was to be as free as ever, and to be ruled still by her own chiefs, the hetmans and kochovys. Just so the horse made all sorts of stipulations when, in his struggle with the stag, he took man to help him. Very soon the native rulers were abolished, and "Great Russian" laws, administered by "Great Russian" functionaries, were introduced. The Cossacks had to submit, except those who lived among the almost inaccessible

islands, hidden by the reed-beds of the Dnieper. Even Peter the Great left these to themselves; but Catherine the Second at last conquered even them in 1775, all except a few hundred who got on board their light boats, dropped down the river by night, and settled on the right bank of the river Kuban, under the skirts of Mount Caucasus, where their descendants are still called Black Sea Cossacks. Catherine determined to make sure work of her new conquest, by introducing throughout the Ukraine the new institution of serfdom. The chiefs, seeing resistance hopeless, submitted with a good grace; it was no bad change for them, looking at the matter from a selfish point of view, to become, instead of patriarchal heads of clans with very limited authority, nobles, with all the power which the Russian nobles wielded till the recent emancipation. But the clansmen were naturally disgusted; and a larger emigration took place, colonising the Dobrudscha—the Delta of the Danube, as muddy and reedy as the islands of the Dnieper themselves. There they lived their wild life under Turkish rule, whilst those who were left seem, with their freedom, to have lost their self-respect and their energy. They sank to be mere clods instead of enterprising fellows, ready for a foray across the steppe, or a raid with boat-flotilla up or down the river, and equally ready for any trading enterprise that had a spice of romance in it. Before fifty years were over, all the trade of the country had passed into the hands of "Great Russians," or of Jews. In education also there was a lamentable fall. Kiev had been the cradle of Russian thought; its university for a long time had ranked high, in theology especially; anyhow it was the only university between the Black and White Seas; the men who helped Peter the Great in his civilising work were educated there. Schools, too, were numerous; there were, for instance, three hundred and seventy-one in two districts of the government of Chernnigof; there are now only two hundred and sixty-three in the whole government. Even now that the serfs have been emancipated, the Little Russians have not got the full benefit of the change; the *zemstvos* (general assemblies, *folksmote*), which exist in every other district, have not been permitted in Western Ukraine, for fear of the Polish proprietors; and even on the left bank the language used is Great Russian, therefore those who can only speak Little Russian don't know what is

going on. Hence they will be slower than the other Russians in profiting by their freedom. During less than a century of serfdom they seem to have lost more than their brethren did in long ages, and it will take a great deal to rouse them out of the sleepy distrustful state into which they have got. Of old times they have kept nothing but their poems—the songs of the *kobzars*, who used to sing at banquets and tribal gatherings, as bards or minstrels did in Western Europe. Chevtchenko is a modern *kobzar*; only his poems, instead of being all about love and war, and raids on the Mussulman, and glorious expeditions down the river, and even to the walls of Stamboul itself, are more than half about serfdom, the degradation that it brought to all, to the women especially. For, as I said, he was born a serf in the government of Kiev, just forty years after serfdom had been established by Catherine, that is, before the memory of the old freedom had died out. His grandfather must have been free; his father may probably have enjoyed some years of freedom. And he died early in 1861, just when all Russia was ringing with the news that the serfs were set free.

The future poet was one of five children when his mother died, and his father, at his wits' end how to manage such a tribe, took a second wife. She turned out a cruel stepmother to them all, especially to young Tarass, whose high spirit and sense of justice angered her. He was made family swineherd, and was sent out with a bit of black bread to spend the whole day upon the steppe. Here he would sit for long hours at the foot of one of the barrows so common on the steppe, listening to mysterious voices that seemed to come to him from within. "What is there in the world beyond, and how far does it go?" he used to ask himself; and, one day, leaving the pigs to do the best they could, he walked on and on to find the world's end, and the iron pillars on which he fancied it rested. Fortunately he was picked up by some people who knew him, and brought back half dead with fatigue—he was barely five—to his native village. When his father died, his stepmother sent him to the sacristan, who kept him and several other boys as drudges, in return for a few lessons in reading, writing, and plain-song. Russian priests are a disgrace to Christianity. "He has priests' eyes," is a proverb which means that the person so characterised is lustful, greedy, and

self-seeking. Moreover, they are, in a drunken nation, the most drunken. A friend of mine, who stayed several months at a Russian country-house, says it was a common sight to see two priests lying in a cart, as pigs do when they are driven to market. One saint's day, he tells me, the priest came to chapel too far gone to read the service; instead of being struck dumb with shame, he actually whined out an apology: "We poor fellows spend all our time in praying for others, and have no one to pray for us; no wonder, therefore, we fall under temptation." Things are just as bad in Bulgaria; an English engineer who has just written a book of his experiences there, went over one Sunday to attend a church, whose "pope" had a great reputation for sanctity. There was no service, for the "pope" was lying dead drunk among the nettles at the back of his vodka (whisky) shop. "I heard," quaintly adds the writer, "that for the five previous Sundays his place had been among those vegetables." Is it any wonder the Turks look on a religion which has such teachers as fitter for swine than for men?

Priests being such, what can we expect sacristans to be? Tarass's sacristan was a drunken brute who beat his boys, and on whom they in turn played off all sorts of unhandsonetricks. Tarass, however, managed by dint of perseverance to pick up reading and writing and a little knowledge of accounts, and to learn how to chant the service; nay, by-and-by, his master would send him to take his place at a funeral, giving him one of the ten copecks which he got as fee. While here, Tarass became exceedingly fond of drawing, covering every scrap of paper that he could pick up with sketches of everything that he saw around him; but at last, the beatings were too much for him. He ran away—how, he details with the utmost simplicity. "One day, the sacristan, more drunk than usual, had fallen into a heavy sleep. I picked up a stick, and, in one sound drubbing, paid him out with interest for all the floggings he had given me. Then I made off, having first pocketed a little book with hideous coloured engravings—how beautiful they were in my eyes! I can't tell now, as I look back on that time, whether I thought he owed me the book for his ill-treatment, or whether my desire to possess it wholly silenced the voice of conscience. Brought up as I had been, I think I'm rather to be praised for not sinning more grievously." After his

flight, he first took service with a deacon, who was also a painter; but with him he only stayed three days, for he found that his master, though glad enough to have an intelligent lad to fetch him water and grind his colours, had not the least intention of ever putting a brush into his hand. Next he found another sacristan, whom the country-folk looked on as a veritable Raphael. "Let me look at your left hand," said the painter, before engaging him; and, having studied the lines on his palm, he said: "You'll never do—why you haven't enough notion of form to be even a tailor." So Tarass, in despair, went home and took to his swineherding. "At worst," thought he, "I shall have my days to myself, and copy quietly the pictures in my little book." But before many months were over, he was rudely reminded of his position by being taken into the steward's family as kitchen-boy. From this he was promoted to be kozatchok in the great house. These kozatchoks—i.e., "little Cossacks"—were half-pages, half-jesters, in the houses of South-Russian nobles; they wore the old Cossack dress, the professed object being "to protect the Ukraine nationality," and their place was in the antechamber, ready to do any little thing that their masters wanted. Tarass had now plenty of time to himself. He listened greedily to all the kobzars' songs about the old Cossack glories, and, whenever he was out of sight, he went on with his painting. Moreover, as his master travelled much, he saw many new places, delighting himself with the illustrated "posters" with which in Russia, as well as in England, town-walls are liberally ornamented. These he used to copy when he could: sometimes he even picked them off the walls, and transferred them to his portfolio. One night, when he was about fifteen, when "the family" had gone to a grand ball, and the servants were in bed, he was copying a coarse print of Platof the Cossack, when all at once a smart box on the ear laid him flat on the ground. His master had come back, and took that way of reminding him that his time was not his own. Next day, the coachman was ordered to give him a good flogging: not for drawing, but for doing what might have set the house on fire. But three years after, at St. Petersburg, his master, finding he made but an indifferent page, yielded to his entreaties, and apprenticed him to some daubing fellow who called himself a painter. Now began a

golden time for the poor lad; living in a garret, ill-fed, and worse clad, he was supremely happy, working for dear life, and when he walked, going to the "summer garden" to copy the statues which are there ranged in the shrubberies. One day an artist from his own province saw him sketching, and said: "You've got a talent for likenesses. My advice is, go in for water-colour portraits." Chevtchenko did as he was told, and got a fellow-servant to sit for him. The kind fellow sat twenty times, and at last something like a likeness was the result. His master saw it, and forthwith installed the ex-page as his painter in ordinary. He was now twenty-three years old, when the artist from Little Russia, who had become his friend, introduced him to a set of artists and poets—one of them tutor to the Czarovitch, the present Emperor. "We must send Tarass to the Academy," they said; but, of course, the first thing was to make a free man of him; to which end the painter Bruloff gave a picture, and the others got up a raffle for it; thus raising two thousand five hundred roubles, the young serf's price.

Freedom gave a new impulse to Chevtchenko's genius. During the six years that he was studying at the Academy, he wrote some of his best pieces. Looking back, he was better able to measure the evils of serfdom. More than half his pieces bore on this subject. It seems never to have been out of his thoughts. Not long before his death, he sent a short autobiography to the editor of some work like *Men of the Time*; the last paragraph runs thus: "There is scarcely one thing in my early life on which I can look without horror. It was wretched; and the horror with which I look back on it is enhanced by the thought that my brothers and sisters (of whom I have not spoken in this little history—it would have pained me too much to do so) are still serfs. Yes, Mr. Editor, they are still serfs. I have the honour to be," &c. &c. Pages of declamation could not speak so eloquently as that strangely abrupt conclusion; we can fancy something almost choking him, as he penned that closing sentence. Nor were his appeals against serfdom fruitless. He was, as we have said, the pet of a number of literary men, some of whom were about the court. Nothing could be done with the iron Nicholas; but there is no doubt that Chevtchenko's poems helped to determine Alexander in the work which he accomplished fifteen years ago. No doubt, our

poet expected much more from emancipation than any legal change could bring about. Voluntary degradation will always exist in the world, so long as there are mean, base spirits who seek it, or fools who plunge into it lured by the glitter wherewith it is often disguised. But then it is a measureless gain that the degradation should be voluntary. Some of Tarass's saddest poems would apply, almost word for word, to our own land; but there is just this difference, that feudalism in England is weak. Americans wonder how strong it still is; yet we know that feudalism among us is weak indeed compared with what it was in Russia a few years ago. And feudalism meant the degradation, as matter of course, of one class to the other—degradation not sentimental but actual, such as has not existed here since the last of the Plantagenets, at any rate. Emancipation, then, was to be a panacea for all the ills of society. Tarass never seems to have imagined it possible under existing social conditions. It must come, he thought, as part of an ideal republic—a poet's dream of the restitution of all things; such a reign of justice and brotherly love as seems very glorious when we read about it in Isaiah, but very dreadful when fifth-monarchy men or socialists try to carry it out in practice. Under such a republic all the Slav states would form a grand federation; the Ukraine should be once more independent, its Cossacks as free as in the old wild days—free, but not savage as of yore.

All this was not likely to please Emperor Nicholas; the Pan-Slavism that he favoured meant something very different from a federation of free states. So, one day, Chevtchenko was put into the army; and then at once drafted off to a little fortress on the Sea of Aral. It was such a lonely station that the garrison was relieved every year—with one exception. "Leave Number So-and-so behind, and don't let him have any books or writing-materials," was the order to each successive commandant. For several years Tarass was driven to write with a bit of charcoal on such scraps of paper as he had managed to hide between the upper and under soles of his boots; by-and-by, when they relaxed a little, and gave him pens and paper, the poor fellow found he couldn't write at all. He took to drawing, the commandant kindly winking at the breach of rules. One martinet colonel, a

man after Nicholas's own heart, reported him. "I'm deaf in that ear, colonel," said the commandant, looking stern and disgusted, "please to say what you've got to say on the other side." The colonel saw what was meant and changed the subject. When Nicholas died, the poet's friends made interest for him, and after eleven years of banishment he got back to St. Petersburg, where he found a group of authors from Little Russia ready to receive and worship him. But his spirit was broken; all his old ambitions were killed out; he longed to get back to the banks of the Dnieper, and to settle down in peaceful obscurity, marrying some peasant girl; an orphan serf he would have, and none other, one of those about whom he had so often written such pathetic little poems. But women look for other things in a husband besides the power of stringing verses together. Tarass was old and worn, and moreover during those sad eleven years he had got to be too fond of drink. The girls would have nothing to say to him, and he went back to St. Petersburg disappointed. There a pretty girl from the Ukraine took pity on him, and the day was named; but when it came she jilted him, and the poor man never recovered the shock. He had given up his life to sing the woes of serfdom; and now his reward was that, while literary friends admired and the Russian world read him greedily, the very people whose lot he had set forth in its full degradation seemed to shrink from him. His heart was broken, though he wrote on to the end. Not a strong man, you will say; not gifted with that elasticity which is sometimes the accompaniment of genius. And the Little Russian race you will rightly characterise as not a strong one; else less than a century of serfdom would not have broken it down, while other races have resisted long ages of oppression and servitude. But the Little Russians believe in a future for themselves. That is why they worship the memory of Chevchenko. They think that their race has only been under a passing cloud, and they hail the serf-poet, who is read, not only throughout Russia, but in Servia, in Galicia, in Bohemia (the latest complete edition of his works was published last year at Prague), all Slavdom over, as proof that the cloud has a silver lining. There are fourteen millions of them, a good slice out of that strange conglomeration of peoples who make up the Russian Empire; and now

that nationalities are so much talked of, they will scarcely be content to give up their language and customs—to be, in fact, Russianised. Chevchenko's more than popularity is one sign of the inherent weakness of that huge colossus which, in the fears of so many, threatens to bestride not Europe only but Asia. How if the Russian Empire is, after all, a thing of pasteboard and buckram, destined to melt into a federation of kindred states? Whether or not, our poet is the people's poet of his own land. He is buried, as he wished to be, on the top of one of those *kourganes* (barrows) which were the wonder of his childhood; and thither from the first day of spring to the last of autumn the pilgrims throng, singing his songs, talking over his history. They are not the educated class; one who has been among them says it would be hard to find another instance of such poet-worship among the poor and untaught. Strong or weak, Chevchenko has stirred the heart of several millions of people; and so he has another claim on our attention, besides the share which he had in settling the serf-question. I should like to give samples of his poetry; but I am no Russian scholar, and translation of translations, paraphrases of the French and German prose into which he has been rendered, would be worse than the brick which the dullard carried about as a sample of the house that he had to let. So I shall leave you to form what notion you can of Chevchenko's Songs of the bold Cossack, and his touching serf-girl tales, from M. Durand or some of his other translators. Whatever you may think of him as a poet, he has made such a name for himself that you ought to know something about him.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE ORDNANCE SURVEY.

MANY persons, not unreasonably, fail to see why the great Survey of the British Islands should be called an Ordnance Survey: seeing that ordnance is one of the names given to big guns, Woolwich Infants, and so forth. The designation arose from the fact that the Ordnance Department has—or, rather, had, until recent changes introduced a new organisation—the control of the two scientific branches of the army, the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery; and that the officers and men of the first-named of these corps have been entrusted with

the survey. A better designation would have been Geodetical Survey, relating to the measurement of the earth's surface; or Trigonometrical Survey, because it is mainly effected by the observation and calculation of triangles. Call the survey what we may, however, there are many reasons why it is desirable to know the exact distances between all towns and conspicuous landmarks; to determine the exact relation which these spots bear one to another, in direction or points of the compass, in order to furnish the data for constructing accurate maps and plans; and to ascertain the exact heights of the localities above the level of the sea, and consequently their heights relatively one to another.

The mode of making these determinations is very remarkable. If we can measure one side and two angles of a triangle, calculation affords the means of ascertaining the lengths of the other two sides; and when one triangle is thus laid down, an adjoining triangle can easily be calculated from it. This is really the whole principle concerned; all else is matter of detail. As a start, mountain tops and lofty hills are selected, each visible from at least two of the others. Ascertaining the length of one of these distances by accurate measuring rods and chains, a base-line is obtained; the angular bearings of some distant object from the two ends of the base-line are then ascertained by theodolites and other delicate instruments, and from these elements a large triangle can be determined. This supplies base-lines for similar large triangles near it; and so the work goes on, until the whole surface of a country is mapped out with a primary triangulation, as it is called. A secondary triangulation is effected by breaking up these larger triangles into smaller, having church steeples, castle turrets, or other conspicuous objects at the angles. Finally comes a detailed survey, breaking up the secondary triangles into others small enough to be mapped out by the usual processes of a land surveyor. From the detailed survey can be drawn maps, plans, and charts, which can finally be transferred to copper and steel plates, lithographic stones, &c., for engraving.

The Ordnance Survey of Great Britain had its beginning little less than a century ago. It originated in an important scientific problem concerning the dimensions and oblateness of the earth's spheroid;

one necessary point of the problem being the determination of the exact relative positions of the observatories of Paris and Greenwich, in latitude and longitude. To effect this an extensive triangulation had to be conducted, with a carefully-measured base-line as its standard of reference. General Roy undertook to lay down such a line on Hounslow Heath. At first he employed well-seasoned measuring-rods; but finding that, notwithstanding their seasoning, they expanded and contracted a little with changes of weather, he substituted glass tubes, twenty feet in length. With these, after minute attention to details, he laid down a base-line five miles long. When exquisite steel chains, by Ramsden, were afterwards used as a test, it was found that Roy's line was in error only three inches in five miles. Triangulation settled the original scientific question in 1789. Some years afterwards the Government determined to extend the triangulation all over England; two new base-lines were laid down, one of seven miles on Salisbury Plain, the other of five miles on Sedgmoor; and so the operations went on till 1809. Officers of the Royal Engineers were then engaged to carry on the minor triangulations, make detailed surveys, and draw plans of military districts in the South of England.

At length the public took an interest in the matter; and the House of Commons agreed to supply funds for surveying, drawing, and engraving maps of the whole of England, on the scale of an inch to a mile, with a degree of accuracy never before attempted. Colonel Colby was placed at the head of the whole undertaking, and proceeded in his task with great energy and skill. His corps of draughtsmen and engineers was at first located at the Tower of London; but after the great fire of 1841, the establishment was removed to Southampton. The whole of England and Wales had been surveyed by that time, and all the maps engraved except those for the six northern counties.

Meanwhile an Ordnance Survey of Ireland on a magnificent scale had been going on ever since 1825. It being a matter of great importance to determine the boundaries of town-lands in that country, for purposes of taxation, local rating, and the like, it was determined to introduce these town-land boundaries as well as those of parishes and counties; and to do this properly, the scale was en-

larged to six inches to a mile. The survey occupied from 1825 to 1842, and is considered to have been almost matchless in accuracy. Some of the operations were really wonderful in character. Colonel Colby measured an immense triangle, the three points of which were Ben Lomond, in Dumbartonshire, Cairnsmuir, in Kirkcudbright, and at Antrim, in Ireland. Although these three stations were nearly a hundred miles apart, each was visible from the other two. Visible, that is, when the sky was clear; but this was a contingency of rare occurrence. Colby tried reflecting mirrors, Bengal lights, white lights, reverberating lights; but the strongest artificial light he found to be Lieutenant Drummond's oxy-hydrogen lime-light; and, even with this, it often happened that weeks elapsed without the lights being visible through telescopes at the other angles of the triangle. Nothing can be done, unless the lights are visible from afar, to measure the angle of direction from one elevated spot to another. It is quite a romance to read of the struggles and hardships endured by the surveyors while engaged on this work; exposed on bleak mountain tops in all weathers, in mud huts set up for the purpose, and watching for distant specks of light which obstinately refused to be visible. Another great work was laying down a new base-line in Ireland. Colonel Colby employed measuring-rods made by Troughton and Simms; combined bars of brass and iron, so adjusted that two minute points near the ends of the instrument were always at an equal distance apart, whatever were the contractions or expansions of the bars individually. This distance was exactly ten feet, within an inconceivably small fraction. So extreme was the accuracy, that a base-line of ten miles long, on the shores of Lough Neagh, measured off by means of two of these compound bars, cannot (it is estimated) possibly err to the extent of two inches in the ten miles.

The state of the great undertaking by the year 1848 was as follows: The whole of England and Wales, except the six northern counties, was surveyed, drawn, and engraved in maps on the scale of an inch to the mile; the maps being mostly forty inches by twenty-seven. And beautiful examples of map-engraving they certainly are. Many of the sheets, by the aid of electrotypes from the original copperplates, were published in quarters, for

the convenience of purchasers. The six northern counties were to be surveyed and engraved on the same scale, and also on the six-inch scale, which would, of course, cover thirty-six-fold the area of paper and plate. There had also been prepared military plans for the Commander-in-chief; coast charts for the Admiralty; county and parochial maps; baronial and manorial maps; and detailed surface-plans for railway and engineering purposes. All this had cost a sum of money the amount of which will probably surprise the reader—just about two-thirds of a million sterling! The sum received for the sale of the maps was comparatively trifling. So much for England and Wales. In Scotland, the survey really began much earlier, for the construction of military roads after the rebellion in which the Young Pretender figured. But, in 1809, a new survey was commenced, on the same plan as that of England and Wales, and was slowly continued for forty years. Meanwhile, the Irish survey had accustomed the public to beautiful maps on the six-inch scale. These surveys were carried on simultaneously; one at an inch to the mile for the whole of Ireland; one at six inches to the mile for town-lands and small rural subdivisions; and one at twelve inches to the mile for cities and large towns. The maps on the six-inch scale are exceptionably beautiful examples of drawing and engraving. The names and boundary-lines of counties, parishes, town-lands, and baronies the names and detailed features of cities, market-towns, and villages; the localities of parish churches, globes, ruins, antiquities, forts, parks, demesnes, mansions, and farms; the dimensions and windings of rivers, brooks, bogs, marshes, harbours, bays, creeks, canals, docks, weirs, locks, bridges, and wells; the position of mines, quarries, lime-kilns, forges, gravel-pits, brick-fields, bleach-grounds, tanneries, and large factories—all are shown with wonderful distinctness. Nearly nine hundred thousand pounds had been expended on the Irish Ordnance Survey by the end of 1848!

But we must on, and briefly relate what has been done in the last thirty years. The House of Commons, scared by the vast cost of the six-inch survey, declined to grant supplies for it in 1851; hence it was decided to finish England and Scotland on the inch-scale alone. Only for a time, however; scientific, military, engineering, and land-owning men all cried out for the

six-inch survey. The House of Commons yielded; the six-inch survey was resumed, as well as two others for special districts on still larger scales. Nearly seventy years elapsed between the publication of the first sheet and that of the last sheet of the Ordnance Map of England and Wales on the inch-scale—so slowly did the operations proceed, amid the manifold delays and changes of plan that occurred.

No one knows, no one can guess, when the gigantic six-inch Survey will be completed; and the same remark applies to other but more special surveys on the twelve-inch and the five-feet scales. We can only wonder and wait with patience. It is literally no joke to pay twenty-two guineas for surveying every square mile of country.

Hard at work they still are, the Royal Engineers and numerous civil assistants, in this memorable survey and its attendant labours. Major-General Sir Henry James has now for some years been director of the whole enterprise; under him are various commissioned officers, from the grade of colonel down to that of lieutenant; under them again are the non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Engineers; and lastly, a strong body of civilians, employed as map-draughtsmen, engravers, photographers, &c. The total force varies from time to time, but may be set down in round numbers at nearly two thousand. That the salaries and pay of this body reach a hundred thousand pounds per annum will show at what rate the total expenditure is growing. Many of the maps of England and Wales on the one-inch scale have become so faint, by the wearing away of the copper-plates, and the details so changed by the introduction of new railways, that a commencement has been made in engraving new plates, from plans reduced from the six-inch scale; some parts of the South of England have recently been completed in this new series. As to the six-inch survey itself, nearly twenty thousand square miles of England and Wales have been engraved and published—a gigantic work, seeing that a map of one square mile covers a surface of six inches square. More than ten thousand square miles of parish plans have been engraved and published on a larger scale. Sixty or seventy towns have been surveyed, mapped, drawn, engraved, and published on a scale of five feet to a mile. A Brobdingnagian map of London on this scale actually fills more than eight hundred

large sheets. A number of cities and towns have been surveyed and mapped on the still grander scale of ten feet to a mile. Local Boards of Health have had many special maps prepared of the districts under their supervision. The Thames Valley Drainage Commissioners, wishing to obtain exact data concerning levels and topographical features, more than a hundred thousand acres, extending from Kent and Essex up to Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, have been specially mapped for them.

So in like manner, Scotland and Ireland are still engaging the sedulous attention of surveyors, map-draughtsmen, and engravers. The inch-map of the whole of Scotland will soon be finished. The Salmon Fisheries Commissioners have been supplied with local maps suitable for their requirements. The Inland Revenue Department of Scotland has been similarly furnished with plans and maps of parishes. In the North of Scotland, surveys on two or three different scales are going on, to serve divers purposes. For Ireland, all the inch-scale maps have long since been engraved and published, and many with the hill-features elaborately worked in; plans of glebe-lands have been prepared for the Irish Temporalities Commissioners; plans also for the Landed Estates Commissioners, to facilitate the transfer of land; while the Valuation Department has been furnished with plans on the six-inch scale, showing every property and tenement marked in distinguishing colours.

For the sake of presenting an uninterrupted sketch of the map-producing work of the Ordnance Survey, we have said nothing of other operations which have risen out of it, and which now comprise a most interesting variety. We have mentioned that electrotyping has been brought into requisition. Almost any number of electrotypes can be taken from an engraved map; a large number of maps can be printed off from any of these; and thus one copper-plate engraving of a map can supply an almost unlimited number of maps on paper. This has been a great advantage in facilitating the operations of the Ordnance Survey. But a much more surprising process is now adopted. Some years ago photozincography was invented, and has since been greatly improved by Sir Henry James. A zinc plate is carefully coated with a thin film of a gelatinous compound; a photograph from a map,

print, page of letter-press, drawing, or manuscript, is taken upon the prepared plate; the action of light eats away a little of the chemical film, and a process of washing presents on the plate a series of minute inequalities, those parts of the film being dissipated which have been less shielded from the light by the dark portions of the photograph. The plate, in this form, can be printed from. Great use has been made of this remarkable process in regard to maps, for reductions can be made from the larger Ordnance plans of a size convenient for publishing; reduced maps of all the counties, for instance, being produced in this way.

But this is not all. By the combined agency of surveying, planning, engraving, electrotyping, photography, and photozincography (some or more of them), work is executed of which no one would have dreamed when the Ordnance Survey first commenced. Do the Geological Survey require additional details put into plans; or the Admiralty require plans of our coasts and harbours; or the Census Office need new plans of public parks, and other patches of thinly-inhabited districts; or the Local Government Board ask for plans of all the Poor Law Unions; or the Commissioners of Woods and Forests have need for photographs and plans of Crown Estates? Sir Henry James can supply all these demands. The War Office avails itself of his services in producing photographs or zincographs of military equipments, plans of battles, plans of important districts in some of our foreign possessions and of the great fortified posts, zincographs of several hundred barracks and forts in the British Islands, &c. The officers of some of our military expeditions, such as those to the Crimea, Abyssinia, and Ashanti, were supplied with numerous copies of these zincographs, to facilitate their appreciation of the topographical features of the respective regions.

Nor have literature and archæology failed to reap benefits from these remarkable operations. Domesday-book being an invaluable authority on the boundaries and area of landed estates in Anglo-Norman times, useful alike to landowners and historical students, Sir Henry James has reproduced it in copies rigorously exact in every feature, and saleable to the public in convenient portions. The Ritual Commissioners being in need of several hundred copies of an extract from Archbishop Parker's Register, and many copies of the

Black Letter Prayer-book of 1638, the work was done by photozincography. When the Government, at the suggestion of literary men and archæologists, determined to reproduce many old valuable national manuscripts of the three kingdoms, it was done; many hundred copies of several stout volumes have thus been prepared. These photozincograph fac-similes of ancient manuscripts, including the world-renowned Magna Charta, are greatly esteemed by those who well know their value. An Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem has been made, and one of Mount Sinai; and Sir Henry James has perpetuated the results in numerous plans, photographs, and zincographs. It is impossible to say where a limit could be placed to valuable works of this kind; for the demand grows more and more, as the great capabilities of the system become manifested.

All this, as we have said, costs a vast amount of money; a considerable dip into three millions sterling has been made. If money's worth is obtained for the money, however, so well. The sale of maps and charts to the public, to parochial and municipal bodies, and to departments of the Government, is small compared with the total outlay incurred, but it is steadily on the increase.

BOTH HER BOYS.

A STORY.

THE house stood in a damp hollow, regardless of all sanitary considerations, between two almost impenetrable belts of gloomy towering trees. It was not a cheerful house externally, though its gardens had more capital and labour invested in them than was bestowed upon all the grounds put together of the country round within a radius of ten miles. But nothing throve on the Balyon estate. Regiments of standard roses were planted afresh every year, and regularly as the next year came round they had to be removed, having signally failed to fulfil the fair promise they had made as to blooming. Myrtles were brought in from cottage-gardens in the villages, where they had flourished without care or culture, and had a vast amount of both bestowed upon them by the skilled horticulturists of The Court. They invariably faded, or refused to flower, or dwindled down from imposing-looking shrubs to wretchedly-stunted plants. To be sure, now and again some perversely hardy annuals made a show along the

ribbon borders for a short time, but those that bloomed were always the duller colours, and the most insignificant forms. So though the gardens and grounds were in admirable order, and were brushed and combed into neatness, there was no beauty about them, and poor Mrs. Balyon began to despair of them altogether, and to pine for greenhouses and conservatories in which she could superintend the efforts that were made, and try her own hand at the graceful work of cultivating flowers. But the Balyons who had gone before the present squire, her husband, had been contented "with flowers that were not too good to grow in God's open air," he told her, when she asked that the glass houses might be built; so, though she pined for them, she went on leading a flowerless life, for Mr. Balyon's manner of refusing favours that were asked of him was, to say the least of it, depressing even to the dauntless, and Mrs. Balyon was far from being that.

No wonder that she pined for flowers, or for anything else that was pretty, at The Court. In spite of its vastness, its antiquity, its excellent preservation, its hoards of old, valuable, and well-built furniture, in spite even of the beautiful scenery in which it was placed, life at this home of the Balyons was as devoid of all prettiness as could well be imagined. The sun's rays rarely found their way into the rooms, brightly as he shines in that fair Western county, by reason of the house being in a hollow, as has been said, and of the trees overwhelming it on every side. And the furniture, handsome as it was, belonged to the dark, gloomy, heavy order that requires to be brightened up with massive gleaming silver bowls and tankards, and with glistening-surfaced china. But the silver at The Court was kept in the plate-chest, and the china lived in its own closet that was the size of a room, and the fair mistress of the house dared not dislodge a single article from its own stronghold under penalty of her husband's displeasure. And rather than bring that upon herself designedly, she would have left undisturbed an uglier life even than that which rolled on monotonously at The Court.

Not that Mr. Balyon ever brought his heavy hand to bear physically upon his wife, but he snarled at her, and browbeat her, and terrified her with rough looks and rough words, till she came to look upon the hours that he spent out of the house as the only happy ones of her existence,

the only ones in which she felt at liberty to pick up a book, or alter the position of an ornament on the mantelpiece, or caress her dogs, or romp with her children.

For the poor woman's life was not such an utterly arid plain as it would have been, had not the blessing of sons been vouchsafed to her. She counted herself a proud and happy woman when she could manage to forget her husband in the society of her two handsome, spirited boys, Rupert and Archie. They were all her own; like her in disposition and person, like her in generosity and affection. Fair, beautiful, courageous, loving boys, they were as unlike the black Balyon stock as it was possible to conceive anything to be. They were all her own! Even their names were of her choosing, for Mr. Balyon not having the faintest preference for one christian-name over another, had magnanimously allowed her to call her sons by names that were dear to her, because two of her brothers had borne them. All the love of her heart was given to these boys. All her hopes and pride were invested in them. The thought of their future enabled her to bear her own desolate present, with something akin to cheerfulness, when they were away at school. And when they were home for the holidays they infused a certain amount of warmth and colour into her chilled and darkened life by the display of such love and tenderness, such devotion and thoughtfulness, as she was sure no boys but hers ever felt for a mother. In a word, she worshipped them, not because they were better or more beautiful than other people's boys in reality, but they were all her own; her idols; the gleam of brightness in what without them would have been a painfully sunless path.

Rupert was twelve, and Archie eleven, when Kathleen Boyne came to live at The Court. Kathleen was wearing crape at the time, in remembrance of a grandmother, for whom she had not entertained any very deep affection, while the lamented lady lived. But she loved grandmamma greatly for dying, and being the cause of a sudden accession of new black frocks. Father and mother she had never known; the one had died, and the other had better have done so, poor, lost, unhappy creature, than have deserted home, and husband, and child as she did, for the sake of a man who, in turn, deserted her.

Kathleen was just eight years old, and a sweet, little, imperious queen of a child,

when circumstances threw her upon the guardianship of Mr. Balyon. He did not think it necessary to explain to his wife what those circumstances were, but briefly told her that such a child existed, and was coming to live with them. He further added, that the boys were to be taught to regard Kathleen as their sister, and, "as for you, madam, if you coddle her up half as much as you do your poodle, and the paupers in the village, it's all I shall ask of you."

"I'll try to do my duty by her," the sad-spirited woman replied, and conscientiously she carried out her promise. No mother could have bestowed more care and love upon a daughter, than Mrs. Balyon gave freely to Kathleen. The duty became a pleasure as soon as she saw the bright, beautiful little girl, and, when Kathleen nestled in her arms and begged her to be "a real mamma," the gentle-hearted lady yearned to the little one, and she pledged herself solemnly to be to Kathleen what she prayed some other good woman would be to her boys, if she were taken from them.

Years rolled on, and the handsome boys grew into fine young men, and the child-queen into a bewilderingly beautiful girl, and still the fraternal relations between them seemed likely to be unimpaired. Still, when "the boys," as she called them, came back to The Court, Kathleen held up her face to be kissed by them, as frankly now that the one was a full-blown barrister, and the other a captain in the army, as in the old days when they were school-boys, and she their pet and plaything.

"Take care that your sons don't fall in love with little Kate by-and-by," the squire had been wont to say to his wife, when the boys were young. "She has a strain of her mother in her, and will make the heart of the man who's unlucky enough to love her ache—take care!"

"If I spent my life in trying to guard against it, it would come about just the same if it is to be so," Mrs. Balyon, who was something of a fatalist, would reply; "and I can wish nothing better for either of my boys than such a girl as Kathleen for his wife, but I'll promise never to put the notion in their heads. Rupert and Archie will go out in the world and see other girls; if one of them still thinks Kathleen the fairest and sweetest, you won't say him nay, will you?"

"She is the daughter of the greatest coquette in Christendom," the squire

grumbled; "however, we must keep the girl here, and I'm not sorry for it, for I'm fond of her myself in a way, and what is to be will be, as you say. If she marries either of them, I trust it will be Rupert, for he will be able to stay at home and look after her—all your training hasn't eradicated the seeds of coquetry from her nature. She's a flirt to the very marrow of her bones."

"Poor child, you've never seen her tested!" Mrs. Balyon pleaded. "The boys are like brothers to her, and she never sees another man to flirt with. I think she's too true and too frank to trifle with and wrong anyone who loves her. I have faith in Kathleen——"

"And I have none, for I knew her mother," the squire laughed. "But I like the girl for all that, and the boys must take their chance."

The boys took their chance, and, when Kathleen was about nineteen, Rupert came home to spend Christmas week in the old house, and fell in love with her in a sudden, unreasoning, sincere, and manly way, and took the earliest opportunity of telling her that he had done so.

She listened to him with bent head and joyful eyes, and seemed to be very much surprised at the turn affairs had taken. Only three days before, she had run out to the hall-door to meet him, and had held her cheek up to be kissed by him as usual. It seemed to puzzle her that he should want her to be his wife, but the puzzle seemed a pleasant one to her, as he gathered from the expression of her face.

"Papa and mamma will be very angry with you," was the first thing she said.

"Kathleen, you know they love you already as if you were their own child; besides, if all the world were angry with me I shouldn't care so long as you were pleased. Are you pleased that I love you, and want you for my wife, Kathleen?"

"Pleased that you love me? Yes. Pleased that you want me for your wife? Doubtful! You see it's an upset, Rupert; we've been told all our lives to love each other like brothers and sisters, and we've done as we were told. It seems unfair on Archie, that you and I should contemplate making a change without consulting him."

She said it so seriously that he fell into her humour.

"You shall write and tell Archie of our engagement to-day, if you will," he said.

"But we're not engaged. I'm balancing

the fors and againsts still. I like you and love you, and I like and love Archie, too; he's just as dear to me as you are. We had better not be engaged; we'd much better not think of marriage, Rupert; let us go on as we were before, and don't introduce complications."

"I can't go on as I did before; you've grown too dear to me for that," the young man said, earnestly. "It must be one thing or the other now, Kathleen; I must either go away, and not see you again, or you must promise to be my wife."

"You shall not go away, and I won't quite give you the promise; yet, I may, by-and-by, when I've thought about it a little more and got used to it."

"Don't trifle with me; don't lead me on for nothing," he pleaded.

"Don't be dictatorial," she laughed; "if I am worth having, I'm worth waiting for." Then she changed her manner abruptly, and said pleadingly, "Supposing I say that it shall be as you wish in good time, will you do me a little favour in return?"

"My darling! ask me anything, anything."

"It's only a little thing that I ask, Rupert. Don't say anything about it to mamma or anyone yet; let it be our own little secret, will you, dear?"

She held her rosy mouth towards him, and was so irresistibly coaxing that, as he kissed and clasped her to him, he granted the little favour she prayed for, though it was sorely against the grain that he did it.

"Everything must be as you like, my own Kathleen; but I don't like anything underhand. I abhor secrecy, and to observe it towards the dear mother, too! We've always told her everything, you know; don't let us begin deceiving her now. It will make her so happy to hear it; let me tell the mother!"

But Kathleen was resolute. It must be kept secret for a time, for as long as she liked, or she would have nothing to say to him! And, as he loved her so, he gave in to her whim, though his judgment was opposed to what he believed to be a " motiveless deception." And affairs were in this unsatisfactory state when Archie came from the camp at the Curragh, on six weeks' leave.

The maintenance of the secret involved a great deal more restraint and circumspection than Rupert had contemplated, when unadvisedly giving in to Kathleen's caprice.

The fraternal relation had ceased to exist; and, on pain of her displeasure, he dared not betray that other and more tender ones had been instituted. Accordingly, a certain reserve and stiffness characterised Rupert's bearing towards his promised wife in public, and the girl seemed to take a delight in teasing him, by being frigid towards him, and almost demonstratively affectionate towards Archie. "It was a pretty little game," she said; "quite as amusing as chess." She would insist upon his praising her acting powers; and to please her—he was so slavishly in love—he would sometimes profess to be entertained by the semi-sentimental flirtation which she carried on openly with Archie.

"But it's playing with fire, Kathleen," he said to her, warningly, once or twice. "Archie's a susceptible fellow, and as he is unconscious of treachery towards me, he may lose his head and place you in a dilemma by proposing to you; then it must come out, and how could we face him after selling him so?"

The girl crimsoned as she listened to her lover; but whether her emotion was caused by anger or contrition he could not divine.

"I will take care that Archie doesn't make a mistake, or lose either his head or his heart to me. You have no confidence in me, Rupert, no love for me, or you wouldn't hurt my feelings by hazarding such a proposition."

"I more than love you—I worship you," he answered warmly; "but I love my brother too."

"Then cease to wrong me by being idly jealous of him," she said, coldly; and, for the first time since the existence of their understanding, she left him angrily, and would not even give him the parting kiss of peace he craved for.

It added to his uneasiness this day, when his mother—always on the alert when her boys were concerned—spoke to him about his brother. "Has it struck you that Archie is getting fond of Kathleen?" she began, and his whole frame trembled under the first shock of definite, realised jealousy, as he answered:

"I hope not fonder of her than he has been all his life, with all my heart and soul."

"But, my dear boy, why so vehemently opposed to the idea? Even your father, who was unreasonable on the subject years ago, long before I troubled my head with the thought of love or marriage in con-

nection with either of you—even your father seems well pleased enough now.”

“Well pleased with what?” poor Rupert asked in an agony. “Has it come to this, that you’ve talked about it—that there is anything to talk about—while I have been kept in the dark?”

“I can’t help seeing that they are very much attached to each other; I have not spoken to either of them yet, but we all must see how very much attached they are,” his mother replied.

“Then Heaven help me,” Rupert said in a tone of bitter misery, throwing himself down on the sofa by his mother. “Mother, you may as well know it now! There’s deception all round; she has promised to marry me, pretended that she loves me! Good heavens! how can such an arch-traitress have grown up in your pure, truthful atmosphere?”

“My boy, my Rupert! I may be mistaken, I must be mistaken,” poor, bewildered Mrs. Balyon cried. “Our Kathleen could never bring herself to cause such misery; but, why wasn’t I told? No, she can’t have acted so basely, and I’ve wronged and misjudged the girl I love as a daughter; it’s just a sister’s love she’s giving to Archie, and perhaps he’s in her secret, and—oh, my boy, don’t fret!”

The mother was so powerless to combat this grief, or to assuage it in any degree. These sons had been her joy and comfort all their lives, and now, when trouble fell upon one of them for the first time, she could do nothing to aid him to bear it, nothing to lighten the burden to him! Such trouble too! If it had been brought upon him by any other man, she might have been able to counsel him how to bear it. But to have fallen on him through his brother’s agency! They were both her boys, and she loved them both better than she did her life; and now one could only be happy at the expense of the other, if her fears were true.

If her fears were true! There was still a doubt about it. She rose up from his side, and lifted his bowed head on to her bosom and bade him take courage, and have faith in Kathleen still. “I’ll go to her at once, Rupert, I’ll tell her that my son couldn’t keep his foolish secret any longer from his mother, and Archie shall hear directly that he mustn’t try to engross his brother’s bride; be hopeful, my son!”

“You speak more hopefully than you

feel, mother; I’ve shut my eyes to the danger, because it was too ghastly and mean a one for me to bear to contemplate it. But now you’ve seen it, and spoken about it, and I know I’ve been betrayed; but Heaven knows it’s not Archie that I blame—he knows nothing.”

Mrs. Balyon determined to go to Kathleen. She would not compromise her charge by implying, even to Archie, that the girl had been less discreet than it was well his brother’s promised bride should be. So she sought Kathleen, and found her in her own room doing nothing, and looking sad.

“You have come to scold me,” she cried impetuously, jumping up and putting her arms round Mrs. Balyon’s neck; “don’t do it yet; I’m so sorry, I’m so frightened!”

“What about? Make a clean breast of it, Kathleen,” Mrs. Balyon said softly. “I may have to scold you afterwards, but I’ll hear what your trouble is first.”

“You’ll forgive me, whatever it is?”

“Stop a moment, dear; instead of scolding you, or hearing your confession, I’ll make everything easy for you, by telling you that Rupert has taken me into his confidence, and that I congratulate my adopted daughter on the engagement to my eldest son.”

Mrs. Balyon tried to speak cheerfully, but her heart was beating thickly with apprehension of what she might be called upon to hear.

The girl fidgeted and blushed, and finally asked:

“You say it as if you wouldn’t have congratulated me if you had heard of my engagement to your youngest son.”

“Ah, Kathleen, remember they are brothers; they love each other so well.”

“You do know—you do suspect something more than Rupert has told you,” the girl said eagerly. “Oh, love me still, help me, I am so unhappy; I kept the secret as a joke at first, and then Archie came home, and—now I dare not tell him.”

“Then it is true he loves you too,” the mother panted. “Kathleen, child that I’ve loved so, what have you done? Heaven help them; both my sons deceived by you! Why have you stabbed me through them in this way? Their happiness has been the only thing good that I’ve had in my life; couldn’t you leave it to me?”

She had put away the girl’s clinging, clasping arms as she spoke, but Kathleen would not be repulsed. She had worked mischief and misery for want of thought,

not want of heart, and it galled her to the quick to be reproved and treated coldly.

"Don't push me from you," she pleaded. "Rupert would be kinder than that, and it's for Rupert's sake you hate me now, you don't care for Archie's pain; he loves me too, and he will have to lose me, and I have to tell him the truth and teach him to despise me—and oh, no one will pity me!"

"I will pity you, I will try to help you, if—if you'll only be truthful, if you'll only try to mend the mischief: you must not see Archie again. I knew he couldn't have wronged his brother knowingly, I knew he was ignorant. My boys are gentlemen, and they have always loved each other and given each other their due. Archie must be spared as much as possible, Kathleen, but not at the expense of his brother; you are pledged to Rupert, and Archie must bear his disappointment."

"You'll teach him to hate me," the girl interrupted; "let me see him once, only once, and tell him of my fault myself; that will be punishment enough for me: let me see Archie once again."

"My sons are gentlemen," the mother repeated proudly, "there can be no danger in what you ask; they will both renounce you if you go with your heart to one, while you leave the promise of your hand with the other; what has made you do it, child? why have you played at love with natures so much finer than your own, when it was only vanity actuating you?"

"No, no, no!" Kathleen cried, falling down on her knees, "not vanity when Archie is concerned; I love him, I love him, and he will never know it—isn't that hard enough? You only feel for Rupert—"

"And you only for yourself," Mrs. Balyon said, sternly; "there shall be no dissension made between my boys; if Rupert can trust you after this, I'll not interfere, but Archie shall not see you and be worked upon by you; my son is but human, and though I think it impossible, you might teach him to be untrue to his brother and himself. Leave him his honour, if you have robbed him of his happiness."

"You have no care for me," the girl wailed; "I have loved you all so much, and you'll all come to hate me, and though I may deserve it, I shall feel it hard all the same. I never meant to do any harm. I never knew it was real harm till to-day, when Archie said a word or two, that

showed me that the end was come! Kiss me and forgive me, mother! I may lose you all, and the worst that may happen to you all is that you may lose me; and as I'm such a doubtful blessing, that may be the best thing that could be."

What could Mrs. Balyon do but "kiss her and forgive her?" "Evil can't come through her," the too partial friend thought as she caressed the girl's bent head; "but there must be no more secrets, no more folly, dear," she added aloud, and Kathleen, relieved from her fear of being further reprehended just at present, sprang to her feet joyfully, and gave every promise that was asked of her.

"Rupert need never be troubled about Archie," she finished up. "Go back and tell Rupert that the engagement shall be made public immediately, and then he'll understand that there's no difficulty; as for Archie—"

She paused, and Mrs. Balyon asked anxiously:

"Yes, what of my other boy?"

"He'll never make a sign, I'm sure of that," Kathleen answered, proudly; "if I'd behaved three times as badly as I have, Archie would never blame me, and never seem to think me wrong. We can all trust him—you to spare his brother's feelings, I to spare mine."

"And may it all end well, and be a warning to you, Kathleen," Mrs. Balyon said, weepingly; "I am trying to think hopefully about it, I'm trying to believe that all my children will come unscathed out of the trial." But though she said this and so tried to cheer the girl, who was crushed by the consciousness of her error, or perhaps by the consideration of its consequences, Mrs. Balyon's heart misgave her sorrowfully, and for the first time in their lives she shrank from meeting her sons. It seemed to her that, if Rupert could be thoroughly satisfied with Kathleen for his wife after all this, that she (his mother) could never be thoroughly satisfied for him: and this, to a woman who so completely identified herself with the interests and hopes and disappointments of her children, was a disheartening conviction.

Through the long hours of this day the two women kept apart from each other, each bearing her special burden alone according to her lights. Mrs. Balyon characteristically confined herself in striving to mature some plan by which she could keep the peace, make her children happy, and still not outrage her own

conscience. Kathleen occupied herself equally characteristically in arranging how she could place her conduct of the last few days before them all in such a pleasant, pretty light, that they would go on regarding her as the blameless, bewitching, always-to-be-forgiven idol of the household that she had been from her little childhood. And the two young men spent their time in nervous avoidance of each other, in distrust of themselves, their mother, and, above all, of the girl who had introduced the element of discord into their lives.

It was not a happy party that sat down to dinner at The Court that evening. Even the squire remarked that there was something wrong, and in his grim and uncouth way made matters worse by discoursing about them. Rupert was grave, but not gloomy, for his mother had given him Kathleen's message, and he had resolved to trust her as before, and to love her more than ever. As for Archie, he was neither grave nor gloomy, but that he was excited and uncertain his mother saw with pain, and intuition taught her that Kathleen had held some communication with him, in spite of her promise to the contrary.

As for Kathleen, she only volunteered one remark, and that was to the effect that it was "a fine bright night, and that the avenues in the north plantation were always at their loveliest, when the snow was on the ground, and the moon was up."

Time did not fly any faster when dinner was over, and the family party had adjourned to the drawing-room. Kathleen seemed to recover her spirits, but her spirits led her astray, it seemed to Rupert, for he failed to keep her near him for a single moment. When he went to her at the piano she broke into louder song, and went on pouring out uncertain strains of melody so waveringly and inharmoniously that even the sleepy master of the house roused himself to express a hope that she "would do her practising in the morning for the future." Archie buried himself among the cushions of a sofa and the pages of a novel, but once he rose to put another candle on the piano, and as he did so he muttered:

"Keep your promise; this state of things can't go on."

They kept early hours at The Court. At ten, Archie said good-night to them, and when his mother asked him if he "meant to go out into the bitter cold to

smoke his cigar as usual," he replied, "No, his bedroom fire would be the divinity he should worship to-night, not the cold starlight." And she kissed his hot forehead, and blessed him, and bade him sleep well; and so he went out.

"Good-night, old fellow," the brothers said to each other simultaneously, and Rupert followed Archie halfway to the door with extended hand, but Archie did not see him. Then Rupert turned to his love, and whispered:

"It's all clear between us, my own, may I tell my father now? we will never have a secret from our nearest again, Kathleen."

"Tell him when I'm gone to bed, and I am going to bed now; I'm tired, I'm worn out," she said, impetuously; "my little concealment has been put before me in the light of a crime to-day, Rupert; let me go and recover my faith in myself."

She rose as she spoke, and stood irresolutely before him, and his mother watched them with a faint smile, and a fainter heart.

"Tell him to let me go, mamma," Kathleen said presently, with weary pettishness; "I will be as obedient as a slave to the voice of my owner after to-night, but just to-night I am a slave to nervousness! tell him to let me go."

A sob broke her voice, and filled with pity and fear for them both, his mother said:

"Let her go, my boy," and when Kathleen availed herself of her liberty with alacrity, and flew out of the room, the poor lady added:

"Heaven direct you in what you do, Rupert, and teach her to reward you."

"And teach her to love me better," was his mental addition to his mother's prayer, poor fellow, as he finally went away, half hoping that Archie might have altered his mind, and gone into their common smoking-room.

But Archie was not there, and the room was dull and cold without him. A comfortable old room it was in itself too, and endeared to him by a thousand associations connected with his happy boyish days of free, loving, unfettered intercourse with Archie and Kathleen. Would that intercourse ever be free and unfettered again, he wondered? Had his brother's love for Kathleen been nipped in the bud soon enough, and effectually enough, for their respective barks to float serenely over the sea of family life for the future? All that must depend on Kathleen, he reminded

himself. If she had the tact and truthfulness, the grace and generosity which he believed her to have, it would all be well.

He had been standing at the window as these thoughts passed through his mind, looking down into the heart of the north plantation, which looked a mysterious, uncomfortable place enough in the cold starlight. Presently he remembered Kathleen's words at dinner about the avenues being at their loveliest when the snow was on the ground, and the moon was up. In another minute he had opened the window, and gone down to the edge of the belt of trees. A step or two more and he was under their black shadows, and then he looked back at the light in his mother's window, and saw the reflection of her figure moving about the room; and half unconsciously longed the more for happiness in his marriage, in order that a portion of the reflected brightness of her children's lives might pass into his mother's.

"It's late in the day for her to begin to enjoy herself," he thought, "but it will be more perfect enjoyment to her than she's ever known, if all goes well with Archie and me."

The thought had hardly crossed his mind, when whispering voices caught his ear, a woman's form rustled in the bushes close to him, and he saw his Kathleen standing, her head on a man's shoulder—that man's arm encircling her. In an instant he was by her side—still in the shadow of the trees—speechless with grief and shame, and outraged love and trust; he was unrecognised, and Archie's startled instincts caused him to raise his hand, and strike the invader a heavy blow.

He reeled and fell, and when they bent over him and shrieked his name in their horror and fear, no answer came, for the sharp edges of a jagged stump of a tree had cut into his brow, and it was a dead heart that Kathleen tried to convince of her fidelity, in spite of appearances.

His mother believed Archie, when he knelt and told her that he was innocent of the great offence of raising his hand knowingly against his brother—believed him, and loved him, and suffered for him, and lamented him, even as she loved, and sorrowed, and suffered for, and lamented Rupert. But Archie had to take his trial in spite of her faith in him, his trial by the laws of his country—that was soon past. The trial that was never over, was his vivid remembrance of how his brother's

life and his own honour had been sacrificed.

He never renewed his wooing of Kathleen, indeed, he never saw her again after the terrible day of the inquest, when she was dragged before the jury to give evidence against him. When it was all over, he left the service and the country, leaving his mother to take care of the broken, penitent girl, who had been the cause of robbing her of both her boys; and Kathleen knew that there was justice in his course, though there was little mercy in it.

WHAT HE COST HER.

BY JAMES PAYN,

AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MANSINGBERD," "AT HER MERCY,"
"HALVES," &c.

CHAPTER XLVIII. IRREPARABLE.

It had not been in company with Gracie that Ella had joined that fatal water-party and met her Cecil—for he was still hers by force of law, she knew, if not by that of love—within the lock's dark walls. Gracie had made excuse to stop at home, which her hostess had accepted without remonstrance. She understood too well that such miscellaneous entertainments, whether on land or water, of the semi-fashionable, semi-Bohemian kind, had no charms for her simple friend, as, indeed, they had not for herself. But to her, at all events, they offered excitement and oblivion. Her companions were mere acquaintances, such as she could number by the hundred, who had bespoken her presence long beforehand, indeed before Gracie had taken shelter beneath her roof. And, since the thing must needs have happened, it was better so. It had been easier for her to bear the brunt of that dread encounter among comparative strangers, than it would have been with that faithful friend by her side, to understand and grieve for it all. We have most of us felt the same, though, let us hope, under less distressing circumstances. If there must be a social catastrophe, say we all, let it fall upon us when there is no one by to share the sorrow or the shame with us. And Ella, but for that little touch of melodrama, which, after all, was natural enough—"His wife. Then who am I?"—had borne herself like a gentlewoman through that terrible scene, and given no cause for ridicule to those about her. Nay, her very earnestness and passion had impressed them, as it had im-

pressed Helen, with the conviction that she was speaking truth. They had heard, we may be sure, that there was something amiss—"shakey" was the word used for it by the gentlemen—about her marriage with Cecil. The doubt about it had added, perhaps, to her attraction in their eyes; but they now no longer doubted that she, at least, believed herself to be his lawful wife. It is even probable that they felt compassion for her while they remained in her company, though it was not easy, and would, perhaps, have been dangerous to express it. It is a difficult matter to sympathise with a tigress robbed of her young; and poor Ella's feelings were not very dissimilar to those of the tigress. Outraged, betrayed, insulted, and abandoned as she was, it was neither wretchedness nor despair that took possession of her soul, but Fury. Her love for her husband was swept away in the current of a passionate indignation against him; the idea of righting herself in the eyes of the world—powerful though it was—was lost sight of in her desire for vengeance. If the woman that was with him had told the truth; if he, indeed, had married her, he should pay the extremest penalty that the law could inflict upon him—imprisonment, transportation, death itself, were too small a punishment for such a villain.

On the first opportunity she left her company—glad enough, doubtless, to be rid of her, and eager to discuss the great sensation of the day with freedom—and took the train for London. Gracie hardly knew her friend when she arrived at home, so terrible was the change that wrath and undeserved shame had wrought in her. A few words told her all, and overwhelmed her with their horror; counsel for the moment was wanting to her as much as comfort, but Ella had no need of counsel. She sat down at once and penned the letter to her uncle, which called him, as we have seen, so abruptly from the commissary's table. It was despatched by special messenger, and the colonel obeyed the summons on the instant. He had the sagacity to call, upon his way, on his legal adviser, Mr. Vance—the same he had consulted about Ella's marriage—and to bring that gentleman with him. His presence was fortunate in another respect, beside that of the knowledge and advice he brought to bear upon the matter in hand, since it imposed some restraint upon his clients. The Juxon blood was up with both of them, and though the

colonel breathed nothing less than fire and slaughter—garnished with expressions that carried the war into another world—the lawyer noted that the lady was the more resolutely vindictive of the two. He had no shadow of doubt that vengeance, to almost any extent, was in her power, supposing that Cecil had really married another woman; but of this fact he did doubt, since his experience led him to believe—contrary to the opinion of some less matter-of-fact philosophers—that madness is the exception in mankind, and not the rule. If Landon had really married again, trusting to the supposed flaw in the first ceremony, consequent on his wife's deception, he must, so the lawyer thought, have been stark staring mad. The colonel had put the case to him, in the first instance, as in nowise connected with himself, and as a fait accompli; he would never have ventured to advise a marriage under such circumstances; but he was quite convinced of its legality even before he had taken the counsel's opinion, which had confirmed that view. No lawyer could have decided otherwise, and no man, as he concluded, would have ventured on the step Cecil was said to have taken without consulting a lawyer. Therefore Cecil had not married again: Q. E. D.

"You are mistaken, Mr. Vance," said Ella, slowly. It was necessary for her so to speak; if she once lost the mere mechanical mastery of her tongue, it seemed to her that it would begin inarticulately to rage and riot, just as one reins with care some evil-tempered horse, whom the touch of the whip, or even the sense of motion itself, would transform into a demon. "This man has taken the woman I saw with him in the boat to be his wife."

"I'll have his blood whether he has or not," put in the colonel, parenthetically.

Mr. Vance shook his white head in mild disagreement with the one, in mild remonstrance with the other. He was a quiet student of the law; but had studied human nature, too, so far as it had reference to legal matters; he had seen many a client "with a temper," but all his angry clients together had not, he thought, looked half so dangerous as these two now before him; the woman, for all her studied calmness, so much worse than the man, for all his fire. The interview would have dwelt long in his remembrance even if it had not been fated to be engraved there by subsequent circumstances.

"What is to be done first and foremost,

madam," said he, "is to decide whether you or I are right as to this second marriage. Some competent and trustworthy person must be sent down to discover the whereabouts——"

"They stopped at The Dolphin," interrupted Ella; "I saw their boat as we passed by afterwards. The people at the inn will know where this man came from."

"Quiteright, madam; then our messenger must go there first, and afterwards to their parish church to examine the register. Then, if he finds them married, he will have to swear an information before a magistrate."

"And then this man will be put in prison," said Ella, eagerly.

"Well, not necessarily, my dear madam. In the first place there will be a warrant, or perhaps only a summons issued, and he will have to appear at petty sessions, but may be admitted to bail."

"Upon what grounds?" enquired she, with sudden fierceness; "they will know him to be guilty, though not as I know him. Why bail?"

"It is the course of law, madam. All offences are bailable save treason and——"

"Which this man has committed," she broke in passionately; "he is a traitor doubly dyed."

"Still he has not compassed the death of her Majesty the Queen," observed the lawyer, with a half smile. "Our proceedings must be reasonable, madam, though as prompt and energetic as you please. Simple as the matter may appear to you, it is not really so; though Mr. Landon should have transgressed the law, he will use every advantage that the law affords him to defend himself. If you are bent on his prosecution—which, I say again, is in my opinion most injudicious, since it is not you, but the other lady——"

"You are wasting time, Mr. Vance," interrupted Ella, imperiously. "You would move a mountain from its place more easily than me from my purpose. If justice is to be had, I mean to have it—aye, and vengeance too."

Here Mr. Vance made the reflection to himself that he had never seen a handsome woman look so what the vulgar call "ugly," as did Mrs. Cecil Landon at the present moment. He had read, in highly-respectable histories of the French Revolution, descriptions of furious women who somehow reminded him of this beautiful client of his.

"My dear madam," said he, quietly,

"justice is dear, but vengeance (according to my experience) is ruinously expensive."

"I care nothing—nothing—for the cost, sir," answered she, impatiently. "Let everything be done without regard to it, and at once; let there not be one hour's delay."

"My dear madam, our messenger shall be despatched to-morrow morning; I propose to send my own confidential clerk——"

"No; I will go myself, and to-night," put in the colonel, decisively.

Ella moved quickly to his side, and kissed him without a word.

"Such an envoy will be indeed invaluable," observed the lawyer, approvingly. "You were a witness to your niece's marriage, and your position will secure a hearing with the Great Unpaid. But remember, before you move a step, you must make sure of the second marriage."

So along the same line of rails that had borne Landon to his guilty love, sped by the mail-train that night his Nemesis in the person of Colonel Gerard Juxon; and not unlike a Nemesis he looked.

Gracie had not been present at the consultation. She was but too well aware, from Ella's state of mind, that it could have but one ending; her own feelings of loathing and contempt for Cecil were scarcely less intense than those of her friend; for was she not almost a wife herself? But in projects of punishment and vengeance her gentle spirit could play no part. To her some comfort arrived next day in those dear memorials of her mother, which she had hardly ventured to hope would have been granted to her. She felt grateful to her father—for she little guessed to whom she was indebted for them—and well pleased to think, though he sent no word of forgiveness, that he could not be so implacable as he had appeared upon the subject of her marriage. If they were not a peace-offering, they certainly gave a promise of peace, and her future, to her dutiful eyes, looked all the brighter for it.

Her only sorrow was on her friend's account; but it was deep and grave indeed, and well might be so. For poor Ella, it seemed that life as well as love was over, that there was no future for her, but only a thick darkness, lit up for the moment by the lurid light of Vengeance, but presently to close again around her, perhaps with yet one evil element more wrapped within its murky folds—Remorse.

CHAPTER XLIX. A FRUITLESS APPEAL.

BUT a week has gone since that council of three described in our last chapter; yet something has come out of its deliberations that has had more or less of effect—from that of overwhelming horror, down through intermediate degrees, to mere idle surprise—on every person mentioned in this history. Cecil Henry Landon, of Grantham, Southernshire, and also of Wethermill-street, City, and Curzon-street, Mayfair, has been committed for trial at the next assizes at Pullham, Southernshire, upon the charge of bigamy; and all the world—which for once meant really a considerable number of persons—are looking forward with interest to what will further come of it.

Imagine the babblement on the matter in fashionable and even select circles; the airy talk in club smoking-rooms of the "grief" that "that poor beggar Landon" is like to come to; the "sensation" among the semi-Bohemians, to whom the injured wife—that is, the first one—was known, even better than the husband; and the scandal generally that ran from lip to ear like fire, among the gossips of the town! The public interest in the affair was undeniable, and, unhappily, there were some persons for whose feelings the word "interest" was very inadequate indeed.

For example, on the very morning that the intelligence was blazed abroad in the London newspapers—within a few hours, that is, after the event had happened—Mr. Landon, the elder, arrived in haste at the house in Curzon-street. He was met at the threshold, greatly to his surprise, for the ways of society were not familiar to him, by a prompt "Not at home."

"Great heavens!" cried he, "your mistress has gone off then at once to Southernshire?"

The reply to this was not included in the footman's orders.

"I think not, sir," was all he could venture upon, and even in that he hesitated.

"For Heaven's sake, man, tell me where she is gone?" exclaimed the father in his agony.

Before the servant could answer, the dining-room door opened, and out came Gracie, white as a spirit. "Come in here, Mr. Landon," said she; and she took his trembling hand, and led him into the empty room.

"Where is Ella? What is the meaning of it—of this horrible lie," he broke

out. "It must be contradicted instantly. My boy will be ruined."

"Alas, sir, the news is true!"

"What, that he has committed bigamy? Bigamy! Do you know, girl, that men are sentenced to penal servitude for bigamy?"

"Dear Mr. Landon, I pity you from the bottom of my heart. I could not bear to hear you sent away from this house; but I can do nothing for you."

"Yes, you can; you can give me help. Ella is your friend—my boy was your friend. I am his father. Help us!"

Gracie saw at once that he believed all. He was not a man to ask for aid of any one, save in the direst straits. His appealing face—a face which that morning's news had already "aged" by at least ten years—was terrible to look upon.

"Alas, Mr. Landon, I have nothing to give you but my prayers. Ella is implacable, and I must needs say that she has been most sorely tried."

"But bigamy!" put in the wretched old man, with a bitter cry. "She cannot know how grave a crime it is, and the punishment of it. A prison—hard labour—the hulks! My boy! my boy!"

The tears streamed down his wrinkled face, and drew down Gracie's with them.

"Then you are sorry for him?" he exclaimed, "though you are not his wife. She must needs be sorry too? Let me see her! I am his father! I will go down on my knees to ask her pardon for him! I was always fond of her; she knows it. I am an old and broken man. She will have mercy upon us! Let me see Ella!"

"She will not see you, sir, I am very certain," returned Gracie. "She will be very angry even that I have seen you. The chain is broken between herself and your son, and all the links are gone together. My heart bleeds for you, sir; but I must needs say, in her behalf, that it was not she who broke that chain, nor even led to its breaking."

"I know it, girl! I confess it! I will acknowledge it in her presence. He has behaved infamously! I have been to Doctors' Commons, and I find he got the special licence for his second marriage, on the very day he last left his home. He has deceived me—his father—all along. He has had chambers in Greythorne-street, and pretended to carry on business there, to deceive this other woman as to his identity. I found out all that before I came here this morning. Do you suppose it costs me nothing to confess it, girl? and

I will confess it to her this moment! I will say to Ella, 'This man, who is my son—my boy—is a scoundrel!' But I will add: 'Yet he is your husband; you loved him once dearly—dearly—as dearly—almost—as I love him still! And you will not send him, you, his wife, you will not send your husband and my son—to gaol!'"

It was, beyond measure, pitiful and pathetic to hear the poor old man.

"I will go—Mr. Landon—I will go to her," sobbed Gracie; "but, I tell you beforehand, it will be useless."

"Go, girl, go!" cried he, with tremulous anxiety. "Let me see her, for five minutes—or only for one minute—and I will bless you to the last wretched moment I have to live."

Gracie went upstairs at once: past the disused drawing-room to her friend's own chamber, in which Ella now passed half her days, pacing it from end to end, like a caged animal, and thinking her bitter thoughts alone. To Gracie she was always gentle; but to the rest of the world her tone and manner had altered strangely.

"Well, darling, what is it?" said she, staying her quick steps, and forcing a transitory smile.

"Old Mr. Landon has come, Ella——"

"Then let him be sent away," interrupted she, impatiently. "I thought I had given orders to that effect."

"Yes, dear; and it is I who have ventured to disobey them. I heard him in the hall asking for you so pitifully, that I went out; and, oh! dear Ella, he is so shocked—so agonised! If you would only grant him speech with you, were it but for five minutes——"

"What for?"

"He wishes to acknowledge his son's errors; nay, his crime."

"Then let him go to Mr. Vance, and prove it. The shorter work that is made with the man, the better. Let him be put away out of sight in gaol, and be forgotten."

"Oh, Ella!"

"Yes, tell him that. Or, if he wants it from my lips, let him come up here and hear it. Only let us have no pleading—except the lawyer's."

Her bitter tone was shocking to listen to, her cruel smile was terrible to behold.

"Yet, this old man was always good to you, Ella, and loved you like his own daughter."

"Loved me! And did not I love his

son? Tell him that that love is changed to hate; that, if word of mine could save him from the gallows, I would not speak it, so help me heaven!"

She had resumed her walk again, and also a certain movement of the lips—a sort of dumb babble, such as is used by the insane—inexpressibly distressing to witness. Gracie saw that her appeal was not only hopeless, but did harm; so silently withdrew, and returned to the dining-room.

"Ella cannot see you, Mr. Landon."

"You mean she will not," answered the old man, the fire of wrath flashing from beneath his shaggy eyebrows. "She has hardened her heart against my boy. She thinks, perhaps, that no worse can happen to her; but may God, who punishes the unmerciful, smite her still more sorely——"

"For shame, Mr. Landon, for shame!" cried Gracie, vehemently. "If you could see her, as I have seen her, you would not use such words; she has been smitten sore enough. She cannot see you, because she is not mistress of herself."

"What, is she going mad?"

"Indeed, sir, I almost fear it."

"What is the use of that, girl, to my boy?" answered the old man, fiercely. "Let her die, since she will not help him otherwise, and help him that way; let her die, I say."

He had risen from his chair and made his way into the hall, while he was speaking those last terrible words, "Let her die—let her die."

Gracie felt, with a shudder, that it would be almost better for poor Ella if she were to die; better most certainly than the fate she feared for her, that she should lose her reason. And better even, perhaps, than to live on, with the power to think, with her husband doomed to a prison by the very lips that had once called him her own. For Gracie was confident that such would be the end of the matter. She felt that the old man who had just left her would never have made that passionate, fruitless appeal to his daughter-in-law's mercy, if he had not known that in it lay his son's only hope.

And indeed, so it was. Mr. Landon, senior, had found out for himself, within those few hours that lay between his receiving the startling news of Cecil's committal and his visit to Curzon-street, all that could be found out respecting the second marriage. He had gone, as he had

said, to Doctors' Commons, and obtained the date of the license, and even discovered in his file of *The Times*, the announcement of the marriage of Henry Landon, of Greythorne-street, to Rose Mytton, of Grantham, on which his eye had once fallen before without a thought of its dread significance, but with some shadow of interest, because he had heretofore thought that his name had stood alone in town among men of business. He had heard, indeed, by this time of some deception having been practised at the time of the first marriage, with respect to his daughter-in-law's maiden name; but only in a vague way. He had no conception that Cecil had relied upon it to save him from the consequences of his second union, or that it would now be used as a legal plea in his defence.

Gracie, on the other hand, knew that it would be so used, and that it would fail. So Mr. Vance had assured her, in the most positive terms; and his opinion had been already backed by that of one of the first counsel at common law, Mr. Pawson, Q.C., who, by the attorney's advice, had been specially retained for the prosecution.

The other side might "abuse the plaintiff's attorney" or even Ella herself, who, he foresaw, would be subjected to a long and harassing cross-examination—"they will turn the Juxon family and their pretty tempers inside out, sir," was his private remark to Mr. Vance—but the inevitable result, he was ready to take his oath, nay, even stake his professional reputation, that the accused would be found "Guilty," and that by no means under extenuating circumstances. "He will have seven years of it, sir, as sure as his name is Cecil Landon."

There was no more pleasant companion for poor Ella in those bitter days than the eloquent queen's counsel, who, contrary to his usual system, was introduced in person to his fair client, whose beauty was, perhaps, a secret spur to him—though he did not need it, for he was a legal thoroughbred—to redress her wrongs.

If the certainty of revenge could have made her happy, as it did her uncle, the colonel, poor Ella would not have been the wretched woman she was.

The spectacle of her unutterable woe,

bright as looked Gracie's future, darkened her present with its shadow. One resolve, which cost her not a little, she made at once; namely, that until the coming trial should be over, though it would not take place for many weeks, she would stay under Ella's roof, and give her what loving help she could.

"But, Gracie, there is another's leave to ask," said Ella, to whom this promised comfort was inexpressibly welcome; "he will not be so blind to my selfishness, and to his own happiness, remember, as you are, darling."

"I have written to Hugh, and he has answered as I knew he would," was her quiet reply. "We are both content to wait."

The tears which fell from poor Ella's eyes, when she heard that, were the first she had shed since the tidings of Cecil's infamy; and maybe they saved her reason. So true it is that there is no depth of human sorrow, but human sympathy can reach it, and though it may not console can soften it.

"I have no husband now," sobbed she, "and, alas! no father, but only you, Gracie."

On the subject of any withdrawal from Cecil's prosecution however, on which Gracie had ventured to touch, she was adamant to her friend as to all others; and, indeed, by this time matters had gone too far for any withdrawal, and must needs take their course.

PROSPECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS.

On the conclusion of "What He Cost Her," early in June, will be commenced

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY

R. E. FRANCILLON,

Author of "Olympia," "Pearl and Emerald," &c. &c. &c.

ENTITLED

"STRANGE WATERS."

Arrangements have also been made for the commencement, in October, of

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

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